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### **REMARKS**

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-25 and 28 are pending. Claims 1, 6-8, 11-13, 15, 20, 25 and 28 are amended. Claim 1 is independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

### **Allowable Subject Matter**

The Examiner states that claims 1-5 and 12 are allowed,  
that claims 6-10 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the claim objections, and  
that claims 11, 13-25, and 28 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

As indicated below, each of the issues pointed out by the Examiner has been addressed. Therefore, independent claim 1 and claims 2-25 and 28, which depend directly or indirectly therefrom, should be in condition for allowance.

### **Acknowledgement of the Substitute Specification**

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Substitute Specification filed with the previous Amendment (Paper No. 11) has been entered.

### **Claim Objections**

The Examiner has objected to claims 6-12, 13, 15, 20 and 28 because of several informalities. In order to overcome this objection, claims 6-8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20, and 28 are

amended herein in order to correct the deficiencies pointed out by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

**Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph**

Claims 11, 13-25 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In response, claims 1, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20, and 25 are amended herein to correct each of the deficiencies pointed out by the Examiner.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph are respectfully requested.

All claims of the present application are in condition for allowance.

**CONCLUSION**

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

*Appl. No. 10/077,973*  
*Amendment filed on March 5, 2004*  
*Reply to Office Action of January 2, 2004*

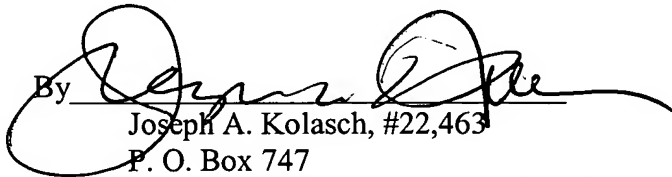
*Docket No. 3875-0108P*  
*Art Unit: 3618*  
*Page 10 of 10*

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

3875-0108P  
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